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Ishpeming Area Historical Society • Newsletter • Winter 2025

2025 IAHS Summer Home Tour

We are pleased to report that our 2024 summer home tour which took place in Cliff's Eighth Addition, which included the mid-century Koenig and Tasson homes, the old Miner's First national Bank and Trust building, and St. Joseph Catholic Church was a great success with over 160 attendees. Our 2025 Historic Places Home Tour Fundraiser this summer will take place on Sunday, June 29, noon to 4:00 p.m. IAHS is working to firm up plans for several historic homes for the tour.

There will be no IAHS Ishpeming Cemetery Tours during the summer of 2025. However, IAHS is planning special cemetery tours during the summer of 2026 in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Barnes-Hecker Mine disaster. As soon as plans are firmed up, we will announce them in future newsletters, on our website, and on our Facebook page.

**Daughter of Ishpeming
Margaret E. Dundon, Librarian &
Descendant of
Marquette County's "Iron Family"**

By David Lee White, IAHS Board Member



Miss Dundon

Kelly Laitinen, who authored a short biography of Miss Margaret Dundon for the 1987 edition of the "Red Dust" publication, wrote of Miss Dundon: "To library 'regulars' of past years, Miss Margaret Dundon symbolized the Carnegie (Ishpeming) Public Library more than the building itself." Margaret Dundon served as head librarian at Carnegie from 1934 to 1968, and over the years, influenced many lives

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with her gentle but firm demeanor, professionalism, and excellent reading suggestions for her patrons.

In retirement, Margaret wrote a short memoir that begins with an account of her first visit to the Carnegie Public Library "When I was a small girl, my twin friends asked me if I would like to go to the library. Being a little older they escorted me protectively up the library steps, one on each side, and as we entered, they held me up as I was overcome with the grandeur and thought I was in paradise. At the desk were three impressive figures: Miss Ropes, Miss Randall, and Mrs. Brayton dressed in black with a large picture hat (a picture hat is an elaborate woman's hat with a wide brim, the brim frames the face to create a "picture") and a velvet choker around her throat. Impressed and a little frightened, I was led to the children's room, the right-hand reading room as you enter. The book I took out that day was a picture book of the sea, thus starting a life-long fondness for books and water. When I sailed the Atlantic, it was with John Keats' letters going over, and George Sand coming back."



Drawing by Roger Junak

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Margaret Eleanor Dundon was born in her family's home on a spring day in Ishpeming, May 16, 1903. Margaret was the youngest of six siblings born to Thomas and Margaret (Stack) Dundon. Margaret's father was born in 1853 in Ireland, the youngest of eight brothers, and immigrated to the United States at the age of two along with his family which was often referred to locally as the "Iron Family." Margaret's paternal grandfather, John Dundon and his wife Mary Coakley had lived on a rented farm in County Cork, Ireland where they struggled to raise their eleven surviving children. The troubles for the Dundon family began in the mid 1840's at the outbreak of the Great Potato Famine. His crops failing and having to give up the family farm, John Dundon found a job in the shipyards of the famous port of Cobh, in Cork Harbor on the south coast of Ireland, where he and his eldest sons worked and were able to feed and shelter their family.

In 1851, unable to see a future in Ireland under a foreign British rule and domination, John Dundon sent his three eldest sons and eldest surviving daughter to the United States to begin a new life and pave the way for the remaining family. 1855 saw John and Mary and the remaining children, including two-year-old Thomas say good-bye to Ireland and join their eldest children in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts where the three eldest boys worked in a blast furnace, smelting iron ore, converting it into pig iron and mastering the trade of founders. Note: In a blast furnace, a "Founder" is the skilled worker responsible for overseeing the entire smelting process, essentially, they are in charge of the operation. In 1859, the two eldest Dundon boys moved to Marquette County where they took up their trade as founders. By the fall of 1861, John and Mary and all but one of the remaining Dundon children joined the elder Dundon boys at the Pioneer Furnace Location, now part of Negaunee.

After the outbreak of the American Civil War there was a great demand for iron and steel. Furnaces to reduce the iron ore to pig iron were erected at various places in Marquette County. The elder Dundon brothers being accomplished furnace men and founders, took charge of several of these foundries. The eldest, Richard, was founder at Clarksburg (about 10 miles west of Ishpeming), Patrick at Collinsville (located on the north side of the mouth of the Dead River at Marquette), James at Champion (furnace opened in 1867), Maurice at Deer Lake (furnace opened in 1867), and Lawrence at Morgan (about 6 1/2 miles east of Negaunee near the Little Carp River, Morgan Heights). After James moved to Appleton, Wisconsin to take charge of the furnace there, younger brother Edward took charge of the Champion furnace.

Margaret Dundon's father, Thomas, attended primary schools as he was growing up near the foundries his elder brothers managed. In 1866, after Thomas attended high school in Marquette for one term, he moved back with his family in Clarksburg and began working at the foundry at age 14, and later clerked at the local store of the Michigan Iron Company mornings and evenings while again attending the local Clarksburg school during the day.

Interested in furthering his education, Thomas' elder brother, Edward, who never married and was founder at the

Champion furnace, agreed to fund Thomas' expenses at Notre Dame University. In January, 1870, accompanied by his cousin, Peter Coakley, who would also attend Notre Dame University, the two seventeen-year-olds, went by stage from Clarksburg to Negaunee, rail from Negaunee to Escanaba, a long and grueling trip through the snowy wilderness by stage between Escanaba and Green Bay, then after a night's rest, the cousins boarded a train for Notre Dame University. Thomas did very well at Notre Dame, receiving a degree of Master of Accounts in June of 1871, and continuing his studies in the scientific course, a Bachelor of Science degree in June 1873.

After graduating, Thomas returned to Clarksburg where his parents were living, and when his brothers Richard and Maurice moved to Menominee, Michigan in 1873 to take charge of the furnace there, Thomas took charge of the Clarksburg Foundry at the young age of 20. In January of 1875 the Clarksburg foundry closed due to the failure of the Michigan Iron Company. Looking for employment, Thomas began teaching at the Clarksburg District School where he taught for five years. Having saved enough money for expenses, Thomas entered the University of Michigan as a law student in September 1881, graduating in March 1884 with a degree of Bachelor of Laws. Thomas immediately moved back to Marquette County and opened a law office in Ishpeming, Michigan where he lived for the remainder of his life.

Margaret Dundon's mother, Margaret (Maggie) Stack Dundon, was born on March 11, 1859 in Delaware, Ohio. Maggie Stack moved to Escanaba when she was 13 years old and arrived in Ishpeming in 1880 where, being an experienced milliner and dressmaker, owned and managed a millinery shop for 12 years. During this time Maggie made frequent trips by train to Chicago where she made purchases for her business and acquainted herself with the new fashions of the day in women's attire. In 1891, Maggie moved down to Chicago, but her stay in the windy city was short as Thomas J. Dundon who had previously courted Miss Stack, married Maggie at St. Columbkille's Catholic Church in Chicago on May 9, 1892. The newly married couple arrived back in Ishpeming 3 days later where they, as reported in the Daily Mining Journal, started "housekeeping at once in a neat little home already fixed up for them."



Margaret "Maggie" (Stack) Dundon and husband Thomas



Thomas and Maggie Dundon Family ca 1910. Young Margaret is sitting on her fathers lap. Photo courtesy of Ann M. LaMarche

Maggie gave birth to 5 children during the 1890's; John Rickard, 26 July 1893; Mary Teresa, 06 September 1894, Edward Joseph, 20 March 1896; George Augustine, 31 August, 1897; and Thomas Stack, 17 December, 1898. Thomas and Maggie's last child, Margaret Eleanor was born May 16, 1903.

After fifteen years practicing in Marquette County, Thomas J. Dundon had built a successful law practice and in August 1900 purchased the Merryweather building on the north east corner of Main and Cleveland streets in Ishpeming. Thomas refurbished the interior of what was now called "The Dundon Block" which included at least two store fronts on the first floor and eleven office rooms on the second floor, Thomas moving his law practice into the two front rooms on the north side.

The Dundon's raised their growing family in rented homes until August 1913 when they purchased the 5-bedroom home located at 602 North Main Street, Ishpeming for the sum of \$3,500. Margaret would have been 10 years old at the time. Margaret's father Thomas had been appointed as Ishpeming's postmaster earlier in 1913 and served in this capacity for the entire 8 years of the Woodrow Wilson administration. With the exception of Margaret's time away at college and her first job as a librarian in L'Anse, Michigan, Margaret would call 602 North Main Street home for the remainder of her life.

Margaret was born without a left hand below the wrist. As we can imagine her parents would have been distressed about this disability, and growing up, Margaret might have had some difficulty performing everyday tasks. However, it is evident that Margaret was encouraged to learn to live with her impairment and move past it. Margaret was fitted with a prosthesis that looked very lifelike. In addition to attending school in Ishpeming, Margaret was a longtime piano student of Annie Traver Voelker, the mother of one of Ishpeming's

favorite sons, John D. Voelker. In fact, John and Margaret were born about a month apart and remained good friends throughout their lifetimes.

Thomas and Maggie Dundon encouraged their children to do well in school, and attend college or university. All 6 of the children received a college education. Margaret graduated from Ishpeming High School in June 1921, followed by attendance at Northern Normal School in Marquette. At the age of 20, in the fall of 1923, Margaret entered Rosary College in River Forest, Illinois and took a variety of liberal arts classes including English Composition, Literature, History, Spanish, Music, Chorus, Botany, Zoology, Library Science, and others. Margaret graduated from Rosary College in June 1926 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in English. After graduating Margaret took a job as librarian for the L'Anse Township School and the L'Anse Public Library and also taught English at L'Anse Junior High School from 1928 to 1931.

It's evident that Margaret felt a need for further education in library science as in the spring of 1931 she applied to the Columbia University School of Library Service in New York City. Columbia requested references and several of Margaret's teachers and colleagues replied with comments concerning her attributes, such as: "attractive, quiet manner, neat and dressed in excellent taste; happy disposition and pleasing personality, and keen sense of humor; is well read and has a keen appreciation of the best in literature and considerable judgment in selection of books suited to her patrons." Sister M. Reparata, Rosary College Librarian replied with "Miss Dundon has only one hand. This physical defect was scarcely noticeable. In fact, I think that I knew her all of one year before I knew it. I realize that in some types of library work, the possession of two hands seems necessary, but Miss Dundon has an exceptional mind and a charming disposition, two things that should advance her far in the profession."

At the age of 28, Margaret was accepted into the Columbia School of Library Service in the Bachelor of Science program beginning in September 1931. One must speculate that this



Margaret Dundon, Rosary College graduation photo. Courtesy of Rosary College

must have been a very exciting and eventful time in Margaret's life. Living and studying in the heart of Manhattan, a short distance from Central Park and the Broadway Theater District must have been a very enlightening experience for a young woman from a small Upper Peninsula town. Margaret was a good student at Columbia and by June of 1932 had completed the core library service program as well as electives in Public Libraries, Library work with Children, and Children's Literature.

Margaret was awarded the Columbia University Bachelor of Science degree in Library Service on June 1, 1932. To be sure, Thomas and Maggie Dundon were very proud of their youngest child. I believe Margaret was glad to be back in Ishpeming as on July 23, 1932 Margaret wrote a letter to her oldest brother John, a physician practicing in Milwaukee, and stated "It is rather quiet here after the city, I'm going back when I'm an old lady." By the time Margaret returned from Columbia University her beloved father was 79 years old and becoming infirm. Thomas Dundon's law practice had essentially ended when the Dundon Block which housed Thomas' law office burned down in late May 1932. Thomas, who was suffering from chronic myocarditis (long-term inflammatory disease of the heart muscle) died on September 30, 1933 at the age of 80. The sub-headline of his obituary in the Mining Journal stated "Last Brother of "Iron Family" Passes Away in Ishpeming Saturday."

After returning home from New York City Margaret was unemployed for a period of time. The depression was in full swing in the early 1930's and jobs were hard to find. Early in 1934, through a program with the Roosevelt Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Margaret became a library helper at Ishpeming's Carnegie Public Library. Living with her mother at the family home on North Main Street, Margaret had a short walk to and from the library. Carnegie's head librarian, Mrs. Nellie Brayton, who began at Carnegie library in 1905 had retired in the fall of 1933 and a group of assistant librarians had since staffed the library. Having experience and knowledge in modern library practices, Margaret helped the assistant librarians bring the Carnegie library system up to date and a re-registration was conducted. On April 4, 1934, the Board of the Carnegie Public Library announced that Margaret E. Dundon had been appointed librarian with a salary of \$103 a month. The little girl who had walked up the steps in wonder of the elegant and grand Ishpeming Carnegie Public Library was now its head librarian.

It was not long after Margaret began her position at Carnegie Library that her mother, Margaret (Maggie) Stack Dundon, at the age of 75 died of heart disease on February 18, 1935. Margaret was now alone in the big house on North Main Street.

It did not take Margaret long to make

a positive impact on her patrons at the library. When she began, each patron had two library cards which when checking out, were placed in the book jackets of books withdrawn. This was a bit complicated for the staff and limited the number of books one could borrow. Margaret changed the system so the borrower's card was kept on file and date cards were placed in the books going out, enabling patrons to take as many books as they wished.

Margaret had long had an eye on the large basement area as a children's library, which had a ground level entry on Main Street in the south-east corner of the building. During the first world war, the Red Cross had used it for rolling bandages and other war time activities. Later, the City Health Department occupied the area. When Margaret heard rumors that the Health Department was planning to move out, and another agency planned to move in, she contacted the Carnegie Foundation and asked if it was not their intention that the building be used exclusively for a library. Their answer was yes. Now Margaret had leverage and worked with the library board and city officials to create a children's library and an area exclusively for children's use. Planning began and the area was first used for Saturday Story Hour and an occasional play. Margaret mentioned in her short memoir that the city was worried that the library staff were "profligate spenders" so "It was by practicing rigid economy and a little subterfuge that the shelves were built." Margaret bought the tables for the Children's room from a second-hand store. Margaret also had to fix the floor in the basement "The floor was badly buckled since it was built on sand and had to be straightened and cleaned. When the City men came one day to deliver something, we set them to work sanding the floor, while their supervisor wondered what had happened to them." When all the refurbishing was completed, the staff moved six thousand books downstairs and were ready to begin their new area of "children's freedom in the library." "Freedom to read, of course, as well as to talk out loud, visit, sing, play cards, play chess, and draw." All the renovations to the



Jimmy Stewart standing in the Ishpeming Carnegie Public "Law Library" as depicted in the movie "Anatomy of a Murder" filmed in 1959.

Children's library took a long time and were completed to Margaret's satisfaction by 1949.

The first Michigan State Aid to Libraries Act passed in 1937 and appropriated \$500,000 to aid libraries. Margaret stated that Carnegie's portion of this funding was five to six hundred dollars per year and was "used for special needs such as records, art books, and paintings. The music room emerged and was popular with high school students as a place for listening and to chat and be by themselves."

Ishpeming resident and member of the Friends of Ishpeming Carnegie Public Library, Marilyn Andrew, had these thoughts about Miss Dundon: "Along with many others, I was a high school student who had the opportunity to work at the (Ishpeming Carnegie) library as an aide. It was Miss Dundon, as I recall, who offered the job. We actually worked behind the desk and helped patrons check out books, etc. I think it was most often on Saturday afternoon that I had this opportunity, and probably most often in the summer when the regular staff wanted time to enjoy the weekend. I especially recall working with Betty West. I graduated from IHS in 1956, so it was probably around 1954-1956 that I worked. I think the pay was 50 cents an hour. Miss Dundon knew who the young book lovers were, and she continued for many years giving young people, mainly girls, the chance to work with books."

Margaret was delighted when Hollywood came to Ishpeming in 1959. She stated in her memoir "The excitement that pervaded the county during the filming of "Anatomy of a Murder" carried over to the library, since it was chosen as a scene in a law library. The center fiction section had to be removed to the floor in other rooms, and the books from the law library at the Court House were placed on the shelves to give the right atmosphere. We enjoyed the workings of the film making and sympathized with Jimmy Stewart when he bumped his head several times coming down the low staircase."

One of Margaret's good friends was Miss Helen Leffler who lived a couple blocks north of Margaret on North Main Street. Helen was interviewed for the short biography of Margaret in the 1987 "Red Dust" and stated "Miss Dundon loved reading and literature so much, it seemed only natural for her to become a librarian. She also loved children. That's one of my earliest remembrances of her is how she loved children." "She had to assume responsibility for everything that was going on because she was head librarian, and that was a tremendous job!" "Attire that a person might expect to see on a librarian usually was not found on Miss Dundon. She would wear 'sporty' types of clothes and 'manish' kinds of hats. She has dressy clothes, too, but I always thought she favored the sporty type"

In mid-October, 1986, Helen Leffler and Margaret had planned to see a PAAC presentation at the Butler Theater. Instead, Margaret ended up in the coronary care unit at Bell Memorial Hospital. When Helen visited Margaret in the hospital, she told her to get better soon as they had a trip planned to visit Ireland. Margaret did not get better and passed away on October 27, 1986. She was 83.



Margaret Dundon had a quiet way of inspiring those around her. One of the many people Margaret inspired was Ishpeming artist Roger Junak. Roger, a well-respected and very talented local artist, was asked by the Friends of the Ishpeming Carnegie Public Library to paint a portrait of Miss Dundon to grace the newly named Margaret Dundon Reading Room which is the area to the left as you walk in the front door. Junak met Dundon for the first time when he was in grade school, which was about the time his interest in art began to blossom. Junak was quoted "This is where I was exposed to art for the first time. From that point on, it affected my whole life. I got encouragement from her. She stimulated my interest in art, which was already there, but she helped it bloom a little more... What impressed me was that she seemed so interested in art, and not just painting. It was music, literature, the whole thing. I could tell she respected it. She wasn't real demonstrative, but the intensity was there nonetheless." The portrait of Miss Dundon was presented by Junak and Jean Crothers, president of the Friends of the Library at a special ceremony at the library in mid-August 1987.

Margaret had served 34 years as head librarian, and retired on June 1, 1968. Margaret told a Mining Journal reporter that while she enjoyed her work very much, she was looking forward to retirement. Asked what she planned to do with her spare time, she quietly remarked "read...of course."

If you have not visited the Ishpeming Carnegie Public Library I would recommend doing so. It is a beautiful example of the early Carnegie library architecture. When you do, make sure you visit the Margaret Dundon Reading Room, gaze at her portrait on the wall, and quietly thank Miss Dundon for helping make her hometown library what it is today.

The author of this article is thankful for the assistance of Dundon family member Ann M. LaMarche for biographical information and family photographs.



John D. Voelker's Iconic and Unique Fishing Undershirts

By David Lee White, IAHS Board Member

While researching and writing the narrative bibliography for John Voelker's "Anatomy of a Fisherman", I ran across an unusual letter that cleared up a question that had been in the back of my mind, a question that I'm sure many of you also had, where did John find those blue and white striped undershirts? The answer concerning John's trademark fishing undershirt came in a letter John wrote to Ian MacKenzie, then president St. Martin's Press in New York City, dated June 4, 1962. "May I ask a favor of you when you go to London? Please try to get for me a half-dozen boat-necked, long-sleeved, striped cotton shirts. I got two in Israel and find they are ideal as an undershirt when fishing: light, easily laundered, and most effective protection against insects. The trouble is my present ones are in tatters and the U.S.A. does not appear to make or handle them. I was told these Israeli ones were imported from England. If you can find any, I'd greatly appreciate it. My size is large, which in America is generally in the range of chest size 44. The stripes are about a half inch wide, horizontal, and I prefer, if possible, those in which blue and white predominate.... The features are full-length sleeves, no pockets, no buttons, the open crew or boat-neck, I shall of course reimburse you. In fact, I shall knight you, Sir.... Forgive the long harangue, but this has to do with fishing, and for that of course I would leave no mermaid unturned." John even drew a diagram of the shirt to accompany the letter.

Ian MacKenzie replied to John's request in a letter dated June 21, 1962. "The half dozen boat-necked, long-sleeved, striped cotton shirts will, as I said, be tracked down by me, if I can possibly do so, in the Tottenham Court Road (district)." Not having found any further mention of the undershirts in later communications, I assume that Ian's hunt was successful.

Anatomy of a Fisherman

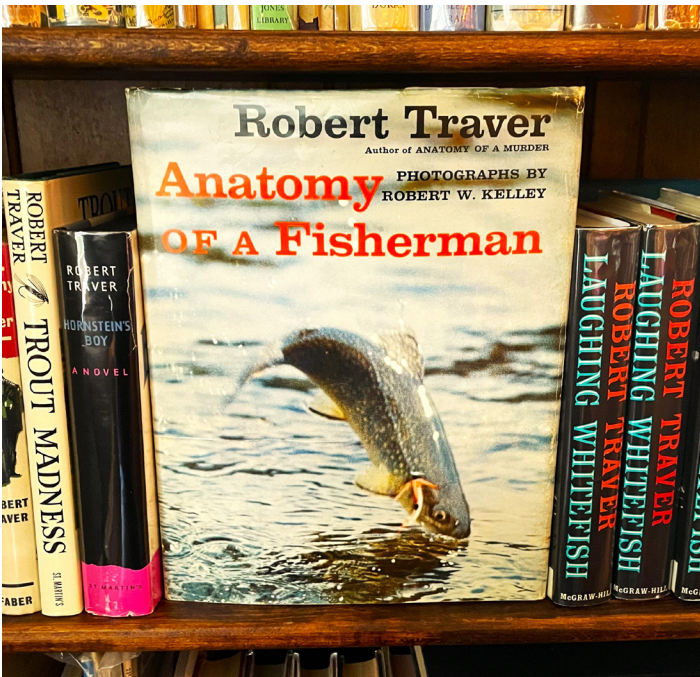
Part Two, A New Publisher

Ninth in a series concerning the books of Robert Traver (John D. Voelker)

By David Lee White, IAHS Board Member

Summary of Anatomy of a Fisherman, Part One. John Voelker's good friend and editor, Sherman Baker, editor and vice president of St. Martin's Press, had worked diligently with John to edit and publish Anatomy of a Murder, Trout Madness, and Hornstein's Boy. Sherman and John were only a few weeks away from going to press with Anatomy of a Fisherman, which John had authored with photographer Robert Kelley, when the British owners of St. Martin's Press, Macmillian Publishers, threw a wrench in the works. Macmillian representatives had arrived at the St. Martin's Press office in New York City with plans for a new direction for their New York house. The new plans did not include its newly promoted vice president, Sherman Baker, and the Brits did not think much about John's new trout fishing book. John had a choice to make, stay with St. Martin's Press, work with a new editor, and publish a scaled down version of his new book (if at all), or leave his publisher and wait for Sherman to land an editor position at a new publisher. John chose his good friend Sherman Baker. It took seven months, but Sherman finally found a new editor position at McGraw-Hill Company in New York City.

Edward Kuhn, Jr., editor in chief of the trade book department at McGraw-Hill Book Company called John Voelker on Monday, October 28, 1963 to talk over the plans for the publication of Anatomy of a Fisherman and John's new book, the unfinished historical novel, Laughing Whitefish. Kuhn followed the phone call with a letter to John the next day. The letter is full of pleasantries and "get to know each other" speak. Kuhn requested John visit the McGraw-Hill offices in New York and suggested a week-long visit...something that horrified John. Instead of the week-long visit, if John decided to travel to New York, a two-to-three-day visit was agreed upon. Kuhn mentioned that McGraw-Hill would pay in full his trip expenses, but if John decided not to travel to New York, Kuhn would be glad to travel himself to Ishpeming. Kuhn described Anatomy of a Fisherman as a "fine Christmas gift for the sportsman who has everything" and that they would plan on publication in the fall of 1964. Kuhn's plan was to print and bind a small number of "Anatomy Jr." (Anatomy Jr. was what John and Sherman called their new trout fishing book) early in 1964 so during the summer months their salesmen could show the picture book to the bookstores



they service “This is terribly important when we are talking about a gift book where the visual presentation to the bookseller counts so much.” Concerning Laughing Whitefish Kuhn wrote “If you finish the novel in March or April (1964) or even later next year we would probably schedule it for January or February of 1965.” Kuhn ended the letter with “Of course, Sherman will be your editor. The more I see of him the more he grows on me. He is a fine gentleman and a fine editor.”

John wrote back to Kuhn in a letter dated November 4, 1963 “Thank you for your warm and gracious letter. I already feel more reassured over moving from one of the smallest of publishing houses to one of the largest. It is quite a switch.” John then got down to business and confirmed that McGraw-Hill would have “first crack” at the “fish book” as long as Kuhn and Sherman “worked out a mutually satisfactory deal and that we encounter no snags in our formal contract...and also at my novel-in-progress.” John confirmed that he would travel to New York to visit the McGraw-Hill offices “You said over the phone you rather thought the fish book might be longer, and I agree. In fact, I have virtually finished three new short ‘essays’ and am working on two more. These I hope to bring with me to New York around the 18th (November), along with the layout and transparencies. I say around the 18th because I do not fly and I have not yet unraveled the train schedules. I will probably stay at the Algonquin...”

On November 6, 1963 John wrote to Bob Kelley “My plans have ‘manured’ (as Justice of the peace Willy Sharp used to say) and I will be in New York on the morning of Wednesday, November 20th with the layout, corrections, transparencies, and also some brand-new pieces for our book.” John invited Bob to join him at

McGraw-Hill if possible, and enticed him with “I’ll even buy you a double milkshake in the Algonquin Milk Bar.” Bob did not make it to New York for the meeting.

John received a personal letter from Ian MacKenzie dated November 12, 1963, that stated in part “I should like to tell you personally that I have left St. Martin’s Press. I have had great pleasure in being your publisher. I had such fun with “Anatomy” in every way and I shall always relish our association and friendship.” What appeared to be bad decisions by the British Macmillan & Company board of directors had excised the last of the officers from the original St. Martin’s Press management.

John traveled to New York and was there on Friday, November 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The following are excerpts from a letter dated November 27, 1963 that John wrote his co-author, Bob Kelley. “I missed your letter, being on my way to New York. I arrived there Wednesday (November 20), whereupon Sherman, Diane (Sherman’s former secretary) and her man Patrick and I proceeded to libate extensively, winding up listening to Thelonious Monk. Thursday Sherman took me to McGraw-Hill to have my new manacles adjusted. I met Kuhn and the brass – all smart, pleasant guys – and we went over things, especially “Anatomy Jr.,” which seems to intrigue Kuhn. First, we had lunch, and when we left Kuhn at McGraw-Hill, an old European fine-book creator and dealer walked in, spotted our stuff on Kuhn’s desk, became absorbed in it – ‘Vy, such a pook on fishing doss not exist’-winding up ordering 5,000, price unset. Ed (Kuhn) swears this is true, and he was terribly impressed, as indeed was John D.”

“That night Nancy Crampton (who replaced Diane as Sherman’s secretary at St. Martins) kept Sherman and I up far too late; and the next noon – Black Friday – Sherman, Kuhn and I were at lunch when the blow fell. All any of us wanted to do was to get home. I planned staying over till Sunday for a whing ding at the Player’s (Club), but of course all that was cancelled; I landed in Detroit (via train) Saturday a.m., via NYC, and finding my Volkswagen, pointed it north and got home that night. Was glued to the television all Sunday and Monday as the nightmare unfolded, and today (Wednesday) after Cribbage I drove out just to look at Uncle’s (Uncle Tom’s Pond). It’s there and looked mighty good. Details on our contract must await a breakdown of costs, but their enthusiasm is most evident and they plan to push right ahead. They too want to do a handsome job, Sherman is in fine spirits, and we had great fun till the madness erupted Friday.”

John wrote Sherman on November 30, 1963. The

letter was mainly about “Black Friday,” John’s expenses from the New York trip, and the upcoming contract for “Anatomy, Jr.” “I think, Sherman, that the contract should provide that the book run all the transparencies in color unless the authors agree otherwise in writing. The point is I don’t want to sign away the book and then have M-H in a position to tell me what they want to run. I do hope we do not strike a snag over this, for many obvious reasons, but this is probably the last fish book I’ll ever do, I hope, and I want it to be as complete and handsome as we have all along envisaged. In fact, I will probably hesitate to sign for the novel (Laughing Whitefish) until I am satisfied with the fate of the fish book. It simply has to be in color or it is meaningless, at least not the book Bob Kelley and I as well as you dreamed of.”

A letter dated December 9, 1963 from John to Sherman was accompanied by 7 new stories John had recently written for “Anatomy Jr.,” followed closely by an eighth story, of which six passed muster with Sherman and McGraw-Hill. The additional stories resulted in a longer, and (in this editor’s opinion) a better fishing book of 117 pages.

On May 19, 1964, John wrote and told Bob Kelley some exciting news “Otto Preminger phoned the other night and asked me to play the part of an admiral in a John Wayne movie he is making this summer in Hawaii. Our daughter Gracie is accompanying me, presumably as my chaperone, as Grace (John’s wife) won’t leave her garden and anyway, she hates sailing and I won’t fly. So, I take off in early July and will be gone most of the month. I think it’s nice to be launching a new career at sixty, don’t you?” Sherman Baker wrote to John on May 19, 1964 with this final paragraph “I was simply delighted Admiral, to learn that you are going to Hawaii to star with your twin John Wayne. Doesn’t Otto need a writer to garble Mr. Bassett’s masterpiece? Anyway, I will be out to see you before you and Gracie are piped on deck.”

The movie to be made in Hawaii starring John Wayne, Kirk Douglas and Henry Fonda was “In Harms Way,” released on April 6, 1965. The screen play was written by Wendall Mayes, who had written the screen play for Anatomy of a Murder, and was based on a 1962 novel by James Bassett. Unfortunately, bad news was the topic of a letter Sherman received from John dated May 25, 1964 “The Admiral is dead. Otto called again the other day and said that the John Wayne script was too long and several minor parts had to be excised, including the Admiral’s. He said he felt terribly sorry. I said I felt terribly silly. I still do.”

In a letter dated May 27, 1964, addressed to both John Voelker and Robert Kelley, Sherman wrote “Here



Coauthors John Voelker and Robert Kelley. Photo courtesy of Grace Voelker, wife of John.

are the first rough proofs for our salesmen and the sales conference next Monday.” The volume was for the most part completed, but McGraw-Hill still had not completed the dust jacket as they were still deciding on the photograph for the back cover. John was insisting that the photograph must be one of both himself and Bob. McGraw-Hill had omitted any mention of Bob in their recent catalogue of upcoming books to be published in the fall, and John insisted on making that up to Bob. Being a photographer, there were very few photographs of himself. As it turned out, the photograph used by McGraw-Hill for the back of the dust jacket, which I believe was taken outside the Voelker garage on Deer Lake Road, included both John and Bob and was taken by Grace Voelker.

On June 2, 1964, McGraw-Hill had a sales conference with all the sales staff, and Sherman gave them a sales pitch for “Anatomy Jr.” In a letter written to Sherman dated June 8, 1964, John commented “I am glad the sales beagles are glad with “Trout Madness Revisited,” and especially glad that they liked the presentation of that old pro, F. Sherman. The first time Kelley met you; you may recall, we huddled in the library at the Players (Club) while you talked shop about Anatomy Junior. When we broke up Kelley whispered excitedly in my ear, ‘the guy,’ he said, ‘is a real pro.’ I nodded and whispered back, ‘I told you he was.’”

John was advocating to price “Anatomy Jr.” at \$10, an even number, as he hated the idea of tacking 95 cents at the end of any book price, he thought buyers would think it a bit dishonest and tricky. In a letter to John on August 4, 1964, Sherman informed his author “I have learned this morning for the first time that a meeting was held last week in which the Sales Department was most concerned about the thinness of the book. Its bulk between boards is slightly over 3/16 of an inch. Consequently, Production was asked to provide extra heavy

boards for the binding and as high bulk, fine quality paper as possible. This extra expense plus the reworking of a number of the color plates to lighten the quality has thrown the pricing formula completely out of gear. As I told you on my visit (Sherman visited John and Grace in Ishpeming beginning on June 26, 1964 for a few days of fishing and discussion of both John's new books) the price at \$10 was still too low according to the pricing formula but the house had decided to absorb this. With the added expense since that time the margin was so adverse that the price had to be revised to \$10.95." Donna Snider (John's long-time secretary) had finished typing up Laughing Whitefish from John's handwritten manuscript the day before Sherman arrived so John could hand it over to Sherman to personally take it back to New York on his return.

It is evident that McGraw-Hill held off the final list price for Anatomy of a Fisherman until the last possible minute. An advance review copy that the author of this narrative has in his collection actually had the price "clipped" from the corner of the front dust jacket flap before being mailed out to a reviewer. A letter from Bob Kelley to John dated September 4, 1964 advised his co-author that during a recent visit of the McGraw-Hill offices in New York, to conduct one last inspection of the color photographs for the book, he was told that copies of Anatomy of a Fisherman would be available on or about September 11, 1964.

John wrote a letter to Bob on September 14, 1964 with the news "Brace yourself! Sherman writes that our book 'is now on press and, of course, running 15,000 copies through four times (four colors) will take several weeks' Ed Kuhn (managing editor) writes 'The book is not going to be off the press until October because the printer has to work so very slowly and carefully with these pictures' Well, I prefer delay to spoiled pictures." The above information documents that Anatomy of a Fisherman had a 15,000 copy print run of the first edition.

McGraw-Hill first received copies of Anatomy of a Fisherman from the printer on October 21, 1964, and began mailing out the many review copies, including 10 copies each to the co-authors. Leaving time for the critics to publish their reviews, McGraw-Hill had announced that publication day for John and Bob's new book would be Monday, November 16, 1964, hopefully, not too late for the Christmas trade. Sherman had earlier convinced both Bob and John to attend a publication day luncheon in New York so critics and literary swells could meet his two authors.

John's personal journal entry for October 9, 1964 illustrates how John felt about traveling to, and spending time in New York "Sherman has beguiled me into promising to come to New York next month for the publica-

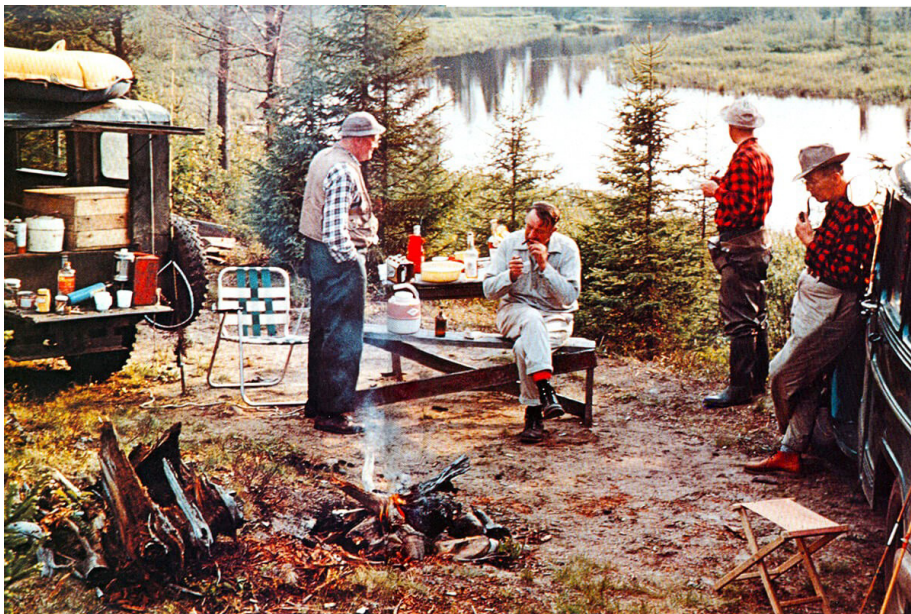
tion of Anatomy of a Fisherman on Monday, November 16. While there I will leap through some hoops; luncheon with the McGraw-Hill brass; appearance on the Today show (where John hoped to demonstrate the roll cast, with or without a pool); a literary luncheon with somebody or other. Well, it will get me away from here during the worst of the hateful deer hunting season and probably help the book. After all, I tell myself, I can go to the city and play clown for a few days if that will let me spend 362 of them up here doing the things I want."

John continued his October 9 journal entry with deeper, darker thoughts about the city "My hatred of city is almost pathological; it makes me depressed and physically sick; and I have wild thoughts that maybe it is the real hell. I feel in my bones that this is no way for men to live. The crushing thing about being in a big city is there is no escape from it, and there is a contributing sadness in watching the ruses men use to pretend to escape from it. It stains everything." In a sense, one can't blame John for his dark thoughts about the big city of New York, the last time he was in the city was a year prior, arriving on November 20, 1963. John was at a business lunch with Sherman and Ed Kuhn on November 22 when they heard the news of John F. Kennedy's assassination. John was so devastated he cut his stay in New York by two to three days and began his trip home by train that same evening.

As it turned out the appearance on the Today Show was not a sure thing. A letter dated October 28, 1964 from Sherman to John ended with "Have just received the disappointing news that "Today" turned the book down. 'Not enough interest in trout fishing at this time.' The fools!"

A month after publication, John was curious how the sales of Anatomy of a Fisherman was going as it appeared to be doing well. Sherman was unable to help him and told John that they might have some numbers by Mid-January 1965. John informed Sherman in his last letter of 1964 to his friend that "I am getting pelted with fan letters about the new fishing book, so I suspect it must be both well distributed and selling well." In a letter to Bob Kelley dated February 6, 1965, John wrote "Sherman arrived to wrestle with my novel (Laughing Whitefish) – it's about ready for galleys – and instead came down with glanders or the croup or something and is down in bed barking like a seal. Told me that despite the bad kickoff on our book it looks as though they've sold half the first printing."

I was unable to find any reference to a possible second printing of Anatomy of a Fisherman by McGraw-Hill Book Company. Since McGraw-Hill made a practice of placing "Second Printing" in such, as they did with Laughing Whitefish, it is likely an additional printing



End of fishing season, photo by Robert Kelley

by the first edition publisher was never issued. A fine reprint of Anatomy of a Fisherman was issued by Peregrine Smith, Inc. in paperback and hardcover in 1978.

From the beginning, a stage play of Anatomy of a Murder was planned for, even before the unlikely event of a blockbuster movie version could have been imagined. With John Voelker's blessing, Elihu Winer wrote a script for the play, which was published in booklet form in 1964 by Samuel French, Inc. In a letter to Sherman Baker dated July 23, 1965, John writes "The "Anatomy" play version opens in Chicago on August 17th (1965) and I wonder whether you might be in these parts then and care to attend." Sherman replied on July 28, 1965 "I couldn't be happier that Anatomy of a Murder is finally a play and will be on the boards in Chicago on August 17. I wouldn't miss the opening for the world and will probably drive out in my Beetle..." John replied to Sherman on August 2, 1965 "It's great you are coming out for the opening of the play. We'll be staying either at Bee's (daughter Elizabeth) or Julie's (daughter) so phone me there. I may be down earlier to help out on publicity. There will be a goodly throng and we'll all sit together. Donna and George (Snider) will be there." John wrote Bob Kelley on August 23, 1965 "The play opened to a crowded house Tuesday (August 17) but I did not wait for reviews or anything, but fled home to The Rock (I believe this is a reference to Uncles). I liked it very much and the audience seemed to. Elihu floats on cloud seventeen, visions of Broadway dazzling his eyes."

John was informed in a letter dated December 10, 1965 from McGraw-Hill that "...Anatomy of a Fisherman has been selected by the American Book Sellers Association as part of the quadrennial gift of books for

the White House Library. The presentation will be made to President Johnson around the middle of January."

John received an unwelcome surprise in a letter from McGraw-Hill editor-in-chief, Frank Taylor, dated April 25, 1967 "I regret to tell you that sales of Anatomy of a Fisherman and Laughing Whitefish have fallen off to the point that we must dispose of our remaining stock. This means that the McGraw-Hill edition of your books will have to be declared out of print." In a rather terse return letter to Mr. Taylor dated May 1, 1967, John advised him that he would consider buying up the remaining copies of both books if McGraw-Hill would let him know how many copies remained, and the cost of

the books as well as the plates. It took McGraw-Hill almost 2 months to reply with the information that John had requested. The Marketing Manager, Joseph W. Allen wrote to John on June 26, 1967 "We will be glad to let you have the remaining stock of Laughing Whitefish (approximately 3,800 copies) for 33 cents a copy and Anatomy of a Fisherman (approximately 3,000 copies) for \$1.57 a copy; we would not charge you for the plates. John must have decided not to buy all of the remaining stock as Marketing Manager Joseph Allen wrote John on July 17, 1967 "Under separate cover, I am having shipped to you 300 copies of Anatomy of a Fisherman and 100 copies of Laughing Whitefish." John paid for the copies of his last two books from an advance Little, Brown and Company had staked him as they planned to publish his new book, The Jealous Mistress.

Last paragraph of the Press Release for Anatomy of a Fisherman

Making this book was "labor of love," Traver confesses, for "old fishermen never die; instead, they write books about their passion...." Traver's passion is readily communicable, even to the non-fisherman; it is a distillation of a lifetime of trout fishing by an expert. "This is the land where I was born," he says simply. "This is where I live and fish. This is where I hope to await eternity."

The narrative about John's third novel, Laughing Whitefish, a historical novel and courtroom drama about the discovery of Iron Ore in Marquette County, will appear in the next issue (Summer 2025) of this newsletter.

Research for this article was conducted at NMU Archives, the editor is grateful for their assistance.

Volunteers needed at the Museum

Would you like to spend a pleasant afternoon surrounded by Ishpeming history? Do you have a few hours to spare, not necessarily every week, but even once a month during the summer? If so, please contact us and volunteer as a host at the Ishpeming Area Historical Museum. Anyone interested in helping to preserve the history of our town is welcome. We offer training for those interested in becoming a volunteer. If you are interested, please contact David Aeh at the Main Street Antique Mall, 121 South Main Street, Ishpeming, Michigan 49849. Phone 906-486-8680.

Please become a member or renew your membership

While we do several fundraisers throughout the year, our memberships are the backbone of the historical society. Through yearly and lifetime memberships, we keep the doors open. We pay for insurance and memberships in organizations such as the Historical Society of Michigan, the Greater Ishpeming Chamber of Commerce and more. We pay for our newsletter and the flyers to help us publicize our events. Those yearly memberships keep us going and they are important to us.

If you are not a member, please consider becoming one. Annual membership is just \$10 per year for an individual. We also have business and family memberships. If you are a member, please renew your membership on a yearly basis. Every membership helps us in our mission of preserving the history of Ishpeming and making it available to everyone. Our membership application is included in this newsletter.

**Our newsletter is sponsored in part by
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Thank You!

Become a member: Ishpeming Area Historical Society

The Ishpeming Area Historical Society is a 501(c)3 Michigan Non-Profit Organization. Our mission is to promote and encourage a better appreciation for and a sustained interest in the history of the Ishpeming area. Your membership allows us to carry out this mission. (We send out newsletters in the winter and summer)

Yearly membership (Renewable January 1st)

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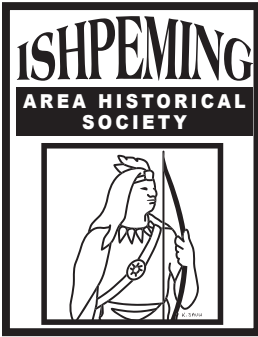
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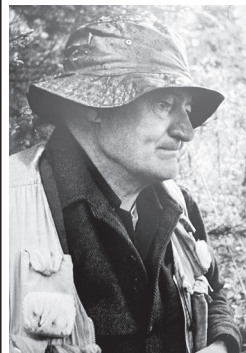
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PLEASE NOTE – IMPORTANT

Due to increased costs associated with our printed newsletter, we will need to remove members who are not current from our mailing list for any future mailings. If you enjoy reading our newsletter, and/or wish to support the Ishpeming Area Historical Society, please renew your annual membership (if you have not already done so) by mailing us a check along with the completed form near the end of this newsletter. You may also renew through our website www.ishpeminghistory.org. Thank You!



**BOOK SALE FUNDRAISER
JOHN D. VOELKER'S
PERSONAL LAW BOOKS**

The Ishpeming Area Historical Society has taken possession of a number of John D. Voelker's personal law books, and as a fundraiser, will be selling a number of the volumes to the interested public. The law books have John's ink stamp "John D. Voelker/Prosecuting Attorney" inside the front cover and will be

accompanied by a letter of authenticity. Please contact IAHS board member, David White, at whitebks@hotmail.com for details.

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